SPINOZA

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Spinoza

Little Journeys

TO THE HOMES OF

Great Philosophers

Spinoza

WRITTEN BY ELBERT HUBBARD AND DONE INTO A BOOK BY THE ROYCROFTERS, AT THEIR SHOP, WHICH IS IN EAST AURORA, NEW YORK, MCMIV

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SPINOZA

MEN are so made as to resent nothing more impatiently than to be treated as criminal on account of opinions which they deem true, and charged as guilty for simply what wakes their affection to God and men. Hence, laws about opinions are aimed not at the base but at the noble, and tend not to restrain the evil-minded but rather to irritate the good, and cannot be enforced without great peril to the Government. *** What evil can be imagined greater for a State, than that honorable men, because they have thoughts of their own and cannot act a lie, are sent as culprits into exile! What more baneful than that men, for no guilt or wrong-doing, but for the generous largeness of their mind, should be taken for enemies and led off to death, and that the torture-bed, the terror of the bad, should become, to the signal shame of authority, the finest stage for the public spectacle of endurance and virtue!

—BENEDICT SPINOZA.

S P I N O Z A

THE word philosophy means the love of truth: "philo," love; "soph," truth; or, if you prefer, the love of that which is reasonable and right. Philosophy refers directly to the life of man—how shall we live so to get the most out of this little Earth-Journey!

Life is our heritage—we all have so much vitality at our disposal—what shall we do with it?

Truth can be proved in just one way, and no other—that is, by living it. You only know what is good by trying.

Truth, for us, is that which brings good results—happiness or reasonable content, health, peace & prosperity. These things are all relative—none are final, and they are only good as they are mixed in right proportion with other things. Oxygen, we say, is life, but it is also death, for it attacks every living thing with pitiless persistency. Hydrogen is good, but it makes the very hottest fire known, and may explode if you try to confine it.

Prosperity is excellent, but too much is very dangerous to most folks; & to seek happiness as a final aim is like loving love as a business—the end is desolation,

death. Good health is best secured & retained by those who are not anxious about health. Absolute good can never be known, for always and forever creeps in the suspicion that if we had acted differently a better result might have followed.

And that which is good for one is not necessarily good for another.

But there are certain general rules of conduct which apply to all men, and to sum these up and express them in words is the business of the philosopher. As all men live truth, in degree, and all men express some truth in language, so to that extent all men are philosophers, but by common assent, we give the title only to the men who make other men think for themselves.

Whistler refers to Velasquez as "a painter's painter." John Wesley said, "No man is worthy to be called a teacher, unless he be a teacher of teachers." The great writer is the one who inspires writers. And in these papers I will not refer to a man as a philosopher unless he has inspired philosophers.

Preachers and priests in the employ of a denomination are attorneys for the defense. God is not found in a theological seminary, for very seldom is the seminary seminal—it galvanizes the dead rather than vitalizes the germs of thought in the living. No man understands theology—it is not intended to be understood; it is merely believed. Most colleges are places where is taught the gentle art of sophistication, and memorizing the theories of great men gone passes for knowledge.

¶ Words are fluid and change their meaning with the years and according to the mind and mood of the hearer. A word means all you read into it, and nothing more. The word "soph" once had a high and honorable distinction, but now it is used to punt a moral, and the synonym of sophomore is soft.

Originally the sophist was a lover of truth; then he became a lover of words that concealed truth, and the chief end of his existence was to balance a feather on his nose and keep three balls in the air for the astonishment and admiration of the bystanders.

Education is something else.

Education is growth, development, life in abundance, creation.

We grow only through exercise. The faculties we use become strong and those we fail to use are taken away from us.

This exercise of our powers through which growth is attained affords the finest gratification that mortals know. To think, reason, weigh, sift, decide and act—this is life. It means health, sanity and length of days. Those live longest who live most.

The end of college education to the majority of students and parents is to secure a degree, and a degree is valuable only to the man who needs it. Visiting the office of the "Outlook," a weekly, religious newspaper, I noticed that the titles, Rev., Prof. and Dr., and the degrees, M. D., D. D., LL.D., Ph. D., were carefully used by the clerks in addressing envelopes and wrappers.

And I said to the manager, "Why this misuse of time and effort?—the ink thus wasted should be sold and the proceeds given to the poor!" And the man replied, "To omit these titles and degrees would cost us half our subscription list." And so I assume that man is a calculating animal, not a thinking one.

And the point of this sermonette is that truth is not monopolized by universities and colleges; nor must we expect much from those who parade degrees and make professions. It is one thing to love truth and it is another thing to lust after honors.

The larger life, the life of love, health, self-sufficiency, usefulness and expanding power—this life in abundance, is often taught best out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. It is not esoteric, nor hidden in secret formulas, nor locked in languages old and strange.

No one can compute how much the bulwarked learned ones have blocked the path of wisdom. Socrates, the barefoot philosopher, did more good than all the Sophists with their schools. Diogenes, who lived in a tub, searched in vain for an honest man, owned nothing but a blanket and a bowl, and threw the bowl away when he saw a boy drinking out of his hand, even yet makes men think, and so blesses and benefits the race. Jesus of Nazareth, with no place to lay his tired head, associating with publicans and sinners, and choosing his closest companions from among ignorant fishermen, still lives in the affections of millions of people, a molding force for good untold. Friedrich Froebel, who

first preached the propensity to play as a pedagogic dynamo, as the tides of the sea could be used to turn the countless wheels of trade, is yet only partially accepted, but has influenced every teacher in Christendom and stamped his personality upon the walls of schoolrooms unnumbered. Then comes Richard Wagner, the political outcast, writing from exile the music that serves as a mine for much of our modern composing, marching down the centuries to the solemn chant of his "Pilgrim's Chorus"; William Morris, Oxford graduate and uncouth working man in blouse and overalls, arrested in the streets of London for haranguing crowds on Socialism, let go with a warning, on suspended sentence—cancelled only by death—making his mark upon the walls of every well-furnished house in England or America; Jean Francois Millet, starved out in art-loving Paris, his pictures refused at the Salon, living next door to abject want in Barbizon, dubbed the "wild man of the woods," dead and turned to dust, his pictures commanding such sums as Paris never before paid; Walt Whitman, issuing his book at his own expense, publishers having refused it, this book excluded from the mails, as Wanamaker immortalized himself by serving a like sentence on Tolstoy—Walt Whitman, riding on top of a Broadway 'bus all day, happy in the great solitude of bustling city streets, sending his barbaric yawp down the ages, singing pæans to those who fail, chants to Death—strong deliverer—and giving courage to a fear-stricken world; Thoreau, declining to

pay the fee of five dollars for his Harvard diploma "because it was n't worth the price," later refusing to pay poll-tax and sent to jail, thus missing, possibly, the chance of finding that specimen of victoria regia on Concord River—Thoreau, most virile of all the thinkers of his day, inspiring Emerson, the one man America could illest spare; Spinoza, the intellectual hermit, asking nothing, and giving everything—all these worked their philosophy up into life and are the type of men who jostle the world out of its ruts—creators all, one with Deity, sons of God, saviors of the race.

WASHINGTON IRVING once spoke of Spain as the Paradise of Jews. But it must be borne in mind that he wrote the words in Granada, which was essentially a Moorish province. The Moors and the Jews are both Semitic in origin—they trace back to a common ancestry. It was the Moslem Moors that welcomed the Jews in both Venetia and Spain, not the Christians. The wealth, energy and practical business sense of the Jews recommended them to the grandees of Leon, Aragon and Castile. To the Jews they committed their exchequer, the care of their health, the setting of their jewels and the fashioning of their finery. In this genial atmosphere many of the Jews grew great in the study of science, literature, history, philosophy and all that makes for mental betterment. They increased in numbers, in opulence and

culture. Their thrift and success set them apart as a mark for hate and envy.

It was a period of ominous peace, of treacherous repose ✍ ✍

A senseless and fanatical cry went up, that the Moors —the infidels—must be driven from Spain. The iniquities and inhuman barbarities visited upon the Mohammedan Moors would make a book in itself, but let it go at this: Ferdinand and Isabella drove the Mohammedans from Spain. In the struggle, the Jews were overlooked—and anyway, Christians do not repudiate the Old Testament, and if the Jews would accept Christ, why, they could remain!

It looked easy to the gracious King and Queen of Spain —it was really generous: two religions were unnecessary, and Christianity was beautiful and right. If the Jews would become Catholics, all barriers would be removed—the Jews would be recognized as citizens and every walk of life would be open to them.

This manifesto to the Jews is still quoted by Churchmen to show the excellence, tolerance, patience and love of the Spanish rulers. Turn your synagogues over to the Catholics—come and be one with us—we will all worship the one God together—come, these open arms invite—no distinctions—no badges—no preferences—no prejudices—come!

In quoting the edict it is not generally stated that the Jews were given thirty days to make the change.

The Jews who loved their faith fled; the weak suc-

cumbed, or pretended to. If a Jew wished to flee the country he could, but he must leave all of his property behind. This caused many to remain and profess Christianity, only awaiting a time when their property could be turned into gold or jewels and be borne upon the person. This fondness for concrete wealth is a race instinct implanted in the Jewish mind by the inbred thought that possibly to-morrow he must fly.

After attending service at a Catholic Church, Jews would go home and in secret read the Talmud and in whispers chant the Psalms of David.

Laws were passed making such action a penal offense —spies were everywhere. No secret can be kept long, and in the Province of Seville over two thousand Jews were hanged or burned in a single year. When Ferdinand and Isabella gave Torquemada, Deza and Lucio orders to make good Catholics of all Jews, they had not the faintest idea what would be the result. Every Jew that was hurried to the stake was first stripped of his property.

No Jew was safe, especially if he was rich—his sincerity or insincerity had really little to do in the matter. The prisons were full, the fagots crackled, the streets ran blood, and all in the name of the gentle Christ.

Then for a time the severity relaxed, for the horror had spent itself. But early in the Seventeenth Century the same edicts were again put forth.

Fortunately, priesthood had tried its mailed hand on the slow and sluggish Dutch, with the result that the

Spaniards were driven from the Netherlands. Holland was the home of freedom. Amsterdam became a Mecca for the oppressed. The Jews flocked thither, and among others who in 1631 landed on the quay was a young Jew by the name of Michael D' Espinoza. With him was a Moorish girl that he had rescued from the clutch of a Spanish grandee, in whose house she had been kept a prisoner.

By a happy accident, this beautiful girl of seventeen had escaped from her tormentors and was huddling, sobbing, in an alley as the young Jew came hurrying by on his way to the ship that was to bear him to freedom. It was near day-dawn—there was no time to lose—the young man only knew that the girl, like himself, was in imminent peril. A small boat waited near—soon they were safely secreted in the hold of the ship. Before sundown the tide had carried the ship to sea and Portugal was but a dark line on the horizon.

Other refugees were on board the boat, they came from their hiding places—and the second day out a refugee rabbi called a meeting on deck. It was a solemn service of thanksgiving and the songs of Zion were sung, the first time for some in many months, and only friends and the great, sobbing, salt sea listened.

The tears of the Moorish girl were now dried—the horror of the future had gone with the black memories of the past. Other women, not quite so poor, contributed to her wardrobe, and there and then, after she had been accepted into the Jewish faith, she and

Michael D' Espinoza, aged twenty-two, were married. ¶ The ship arrived at Amsterdam in safety. In a year, on November 24th, 1632, in a little stone house that still stands on the canal bank, was born Benedict Spinoza.

BENEDICT SPINOZA was brought up in the faith and culture of his people. Beyond his religious training at the synagogue, there was a Jewish High School at Amsterdam which he attended. This school might compare very favorably with our modern schools, in that it included a certain degree of manual training. Beyond this he had received special instructions from several learned rabbis. In matters of true education, the Jews have ever been in advance of the Gentile world—they bring their children up to be useful. The father of Benedict was a maker of lenses for spectacles, and at this trade the boy was very early set to work. Again and again in the writings of Spinoza, we find the argument that every man should have a trade and earn his living with his hands, not by writing, speaking or philosophizing. If you can earn a living at your trade, you thus make your mind free.

This early idea of usefulness led to a sympathy with another religious body, of which there were quite a number of members in Holland: the Mennonites. This sect was founded by Menno Simons, a Frieslander, contemporary of Luther, only this man swung on further

from Catholicism than Luther and declared that a paid priesthood was what made all the trouble. Religion to him was a matter of individual inspiration. When an institution was formed, built on man's sense of relation with his Maker, property purchased, and paid priests employed, instantly there was a pollution of the well of life. It became a money-making scheme, and a grand clutch for place and power followed: it really ceased to be religion at all, so long as we define religion in its spiritual sense. "A priest," said Menno, "is a man who thrives on the sacred relations that exist between man and God, and is little better than a person who would live on the love emotions of men and women."

This certainly was bold language, but to be exact, it was persecution that forced the expression. The Catholics had placed an interdict on all services held by Protestant pastors, and the deprivation proved to Menno that paid preaching and costly churches and trappings were really not necessary at all. Man could go to God without them, and pray in secret. Spirituality is not dependent on either church or priest.

The Mennonites in Holland escaped theological criticism by disclaiming to be a church, and calling their institution a college, and themselves "Collegiants."

All the Mennonites asked was to be let alone. They were plain, unpretentious people, who worked hard, lived frugally, refused to make oaths, to accept civil office, or to go to war. They are a variant of the impulse that makes Quakers and all those peculiar people known

as primitive Christians, who mark the swinging of the pendulum from pride and pretense to simplicity and a life of modest usefulness.

The sincerity, truthfulness and virtue of the Mennonites so impressed itself upon even the ruthless Corsican, that he made them exempt from conscription.

Before Spinoza was twenty, he had come into acquaintanceship with these plain people. His relationship with the rabbis and learned men of Israel had given him a culture that the Mennonites did not possess; but these plain people, by the earnestness of their lives, showed him that the science of theology was not a science at all. Nobody understands theology—it is not meant to be understood—it is for belief. Spinoza compared the Mennonites, who confessed they knew nothing, but hoped much, to the rabbis, who pretended they knew all. His praise of the Mennonites, and his criticisms of the growing love for power in Judaism were carried to the Jewish authorities by some young men who had come to him in the guise of learners. Moreover, the report was abroad that he was to marry a Gentile—the daughter of Van den Ende, the infidel.

¶ On order, he appeared at the synagogue, and defended his position. His ability in argument, his knowledge of Jewish law, his insight into the lessons of history, were alarming to the assembled rabbis. The young man was quiet, gentle, but firm. He expressed the belief that God might possibly have revealed Himself to other peoples beside the Jews.

"Then you are not a Jew!" was the answer. "Yes, I am a Jew, and I love my faith."

"But it is not all to you?"

"I confess that occasionally I have found what seems to be truth outside of the Law."

The rabbis tore their raiment in mingled rage and surprise at the young man's temerity.

Spinoza did not withdraw from the Jewish Congregation—he was thrust out. Moreover, a fanatical Jew, in the warmth of his religious zeal, attempted to kill him. Spinoza escaped, his clothing cut through by a dagger thrust, close to the heart.

The curse of Israel was upon him—his own brothers and sisters refused him shelter, his father turned against him, and again was the icy unkindness of kinsmen made manifest. The tribe of Spinoza lives in history, saved from the fell clutch of oblivion by the man it denied with an oath and pushed in bitterness from its heart. Spinoza fled to his friends, the Mennonites, plain market-gardeners who lived a few miles out of the city

Spinoza had not meant to leave the Jews—the racial instinct was strong in him, and the pride of his people colored his character to the last. But the attempts to bribe him and coerce him into a following of fanatical law, when this law did not appeal to his common sense, forced him into a position that his enemies took for innate perversity. When an eagle is hatched in a barnyard brood and mounts on soaring pinions toward the

sun, it is always cursed and vilified because it does not remain at home and scratch in the compost. Its flight skyward is construed as proof of its vile nature.

How can people who do not think, and cannot think, and therefore have no thoughts to express, sympathize with one whose highest joy comes from the expression of his thought?

Deprive a thinker of the privilege to think and you take from him his life. The joy of existence lies in self-expression. What if we should order the painter to quit his canvas, the sculptor to lay aside his tools, the farmer to leave the soil? Do these things, and you do no more than you do when you force a thinker to follow in the groove that dead men have furrowed. The thirst for knowledge must be slaked or the soul sickens and slow death follows.

In Spinoza's time the literature of Greece and Rome was locked in the Latin language, which the Jews were forbidden to acquire. Young Spinoza longed to know what Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca and Virgil had taught, but these authors were considered anathema by the rabbinical councils. Spinoza desired to be honest, and so asked for a special dispensation in his favor, as he was to be a teacher—could he study the Latin language?

And the answer was, "Read your Joshua, first chapter and eighth verse, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.'"

From this time on Spinoza was more or less under the ban, and rumors of his heresy were rife. It is possible if it had not been for one person, that the growing desire for knowledge, the reaching out for better things, the dissatisfaction with his environment might have passed in safety and the restless young rabbi slipped back into the conventional Jew. Youth always has its periods of unrest—sometimes more, sometimes less.

¶ Spinoza had made the acquaintance of Van den Ende, a teacher of Greek and Latin, an erratic, argumentative rationalist, who had his say on all topics of the time, and fixed his place in history by being shot as a revolutionary, just outside the walls of the Bastile.

But at this time Van den Ende was fairly prosperous and Amsterdam was the freest city in Christendom.

¶ Van den Ende had a daughter, Clara Maria, a little younger than Spinoza, who surely was a most superior woman. She was the companion of her father in his studies. It speaks well for the father and it speaks well for the daughter that they were comrades and that his highest thought was expressed to her. I can conceive of no finer joy coming to a man than, as his hair whitens, to have a daughter who understands him at his best, who enters into his life, sympathizes with his ideals, ministers to his mental needs, who is his companion and friend. Only a great man ever has such a daughter. Madame de Stael, who delighted in being called "the daughter of Necker," was such a woman, and the splendor of her mind was no less her father's

glory than was the fact that he was the greatest financier of his time.

Clara Van den Ende was her father's helper and companion, and when he was busied in other tasks she took charge of his classes.

Auerbach has written a charming story with Clara Van den Ende and Spinoza as a central theme. In the tale is pictured with skilful psychology the awakening of the sleeping soul of Spinoza as he was introduced from a cheerless home, devoid of art and freedom, into the beauties of undraped Greece and the fine atmosphere of a forum where nothing human was considered alien.

¶ From a love for Virgil, Cicero and Horace, to a love for each other, was a very natural sequence. A growing indifference for the censure of Judaism was quite a natural result. Auerbach would have us believe that no man alone ever stood out against the revilings of kinsmen and the stupidity of sectarians: we move in the line of least resistance and only a very great passion makes it possible for a man to calmly face the contumely of an angry world.

Zangwill, in his vivid sketch, "The Maker of Lenses," makes this single love episode in the life of Spinoza the controlling impulse of his life, probably reasoning on the premise that men who mark epochs are ever and always, without exception, those with the love nature strongly implanted in their hearts. So thoroughly does Zangwill believe in the one passion of Spinoza's life, that a score of years after the chief incident of it

had transpired, he pictures the philosopher trembling at mention of the woman's name, coughing to conceal his agitation and clutching the door post for support. And this a man who smilingly faced a mob that howled for his life, and was only moved to philosophize on the nature of human intellect when a flying stone grazed his cheek!

But the lady had ambitions—the lens-maker was penniless, and probably always would be—his passion was passive—he lacked the show and dash that made other women jealous. And so Oldenburg, a rival with love and jewels, won the heart that could not be won by love alone. That the lady soon knew she had erred did not help her case—Spinoza loved his ideal, and he had thought it was the woman.

FOLLOW Zangwill's stories of the Ghetto and your heart is wrung by the injustice, cruelty and inhumanity visited upon the Jews by the people who worship a Jew as God and make daily supplications to a Jewess. But read between the lines and you will see that Israel Zangwill, child of the Ghetto, knows that the Peculiar People are peculiar through persecution, and not necessarily so through innate nature. Zangwill knows that no religion is pure excepting in its stage of persecution, and that Judaism, grown rich and powerful, would oppress and has oppressed. Martyr and persecutor shift places easily.

The Jew arrives in a city at night and in the morning takes down the shutters and is doing business. The Jew winds his way into the life of every city and becomes at once an integral part of it. A part yet separate and distinct, for his social and religious life is not colored by his environment.

Children imitate unconsciously. The golden rule is not natural to children, it has to be taught them. They do unto others as others have done unto them, and have no question as to right or wrong. We are all children, and have to think hard before we are conscious of any feeling of the brotherhood of man. As soon as the Jews relaxed in Amsterdam—got their breath, and felt secure, they did unto others as they had been done by—they persecuted.

A Jew must be a Jew, and as they had been watched with suspicion in Spain and Portugal by the Christians, so now they watched each other for heresies. They compelled strictest obedience to every form and ceremony. To the Jew the Law forms the firmament above and the earth beneath. All is law to him, and his part and work in this life is obedience to law.

The Jewish religion is a concrete, unbroken mass of laws. The Jew is bounded on the east by law; on the north by law; on the west by law; on the south by law. There are set rules and laws that govern his getting up, his going to bed, his eating, drinking, sleeping, and praying. There is no phase of human relationship that is not covered by the Mishna and Gemara. Being

learned in the Law means being learned in the proper way to kill chickens, to dress ducks, wear your vestments, go to prayers and what to say when you meet two Christians in an alley. If a Jew quarrels with a neighbor and goes to his Rabbi for advice, the learned man gets down his Talmud and finds the page. The relation of wife and husband, child and parent, brother and sister, lover and sweetheart, are covered by law, fixed, immovable. The learned men of Judah are men learned in the Law, not learned in the science of life, and common sense. When these learned men meet they argue for six days and nights together as to interpretations of the Law concerning whether it is right to make a fire in your cook-stove on the Sabbath if a Christian is starving for food on your doorstep, or what will become of you if you eat pork to save your life.

Rational Jews are those who do what they think is right, but Orthodox Jews are those who do what the Law prescribes. When Jesus plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, he proved himself a Rational Jew —he set his own opinion higher than Law and thereby made himself an outcast. Jewish Law provides curdling curses for just such offenses.

Plato's Republic was a scheme of life regulated absolutely by law; every contingency was provided for. And Plato's plan was founded on the hypothesis that it is the duty of wise men to do the thinking and regulate the conduct of those who are supposed not to be wise enough to think and act for themselves. But

Plato's idea lacked the "Thus saith the Lord," with which Moses and Aaron enforced their edicts. So Plato's Republic is still on paper, for no set of rules minutely regulating conduct has ever been enforced excepting as the ruler made his subjects believe he received his instructions direct from God.

Yet all the Jewish Laws are founded with an eye to a sanitary and hygienic good—they are built on the basis of expediency. And that rule of the Gemara which provides that if you have gravy on the table, you cannot also have butter, without sin, seems more of a move in the direction of economics than a matter of ethics. Laws are good for the people who believe that a blind obedience to a good thing is better than to work your way alone and find out for yourself what is best and right. The Jewish Law is based, like all religious codes, on the assumption that man by nature is vile, and really prefers wrong to right.

The thought that all men prefer the good, and think at the moment they are doing what is best, no matter what they do, was first sharply and clearly expressed by Spinoza. Truth, he said, could only be reached through freedom—a man must even have the privilege of thinking wrong so long as his actions do not jeopardize the life and immediate safety of others.

For a people whose every act is governed by fixed laws there can be no progression. Mistakes are the rungs of the ladder by which we reach the skies. The man who allows the dead to regulate his life, and accepts their

thinking as final, satisfied to repeat what he is taught, remains forever in the lowlands. His wings are leaden.

¶ The Jews—most law-bound and priest-ridden of all peoples—are at home everywhere because they have no home. They mix in the life of every nation and remain forever separate and apart. They will run with you, ride with you, trade with you, but they will not eat with you nor pray with you. They build no Altars to the Unknown God, out of courtesy to visitors and guests from distant climes. Mohammedans recognize the divinity of Jesus, the Buddhists look upon him as one of many Christs, the Universalist sees good in every faith, but the Jew regards all other religions than his own as pestilence. If by chance, or in the line of business, he finds himself in a heathen temple or Christian Church, his Gemara orders that he shall present himself at his own temple for purification.

Read Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, and you behold on every page curses, revilings, threats and bitter scorn for all outside the pale. Orders by Jehovah to burn, kill and utterly destroy are frequent. And we must remember that every people make their god in their own image. A man's God is himself at his best; his devil is himself at his worst.

The very expression, "The Chosen People," would be an insult to every man outside the pale, were it not such a petulant and childish boast that its serious assumption makes us smile.

Well does Moses Mendelssohn, the Jew, say, "The

Ghetto is an arrangement first contrived by Jews for keeping infidels out of a sacred precinct. When the infidels were strong enough they turned the tables and forbade the Jews to leave their Ghetto except at certain hours. For the misery, poverty and squalor of the Ghetto the Jew is not to blame—if he could, he would have the Ghetto a place of opulence, beauty and all that makes for the good. Every undesirable thing he would bestow on the outsider. In the twilight days of Jewish power, the Jew with bigotry, arrogance and intolerance unsurpassed, regulated the infidels and fixed their goings and comings as they now do his, and he would do it again if he had the power. The Jew never changes —once a Jew always a Jew."

This was written by a man who was not only a Jew, but a man. He was a Jew in pride of race—in racial instinct, but he was great enough to know that all men are God's children, and that to set up a fixed, dogmatic standard regulating every act of life has its serious penalties. He was a Jew so big that he knew that the cruelty and inhumanity visited upon the Jews by Christians was first taught to these Christians by Jews —it is all in the Old Testament. The villainy you have taught me I will execute. It shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.

The Christians who had persecuted Jews were really orthodox Jews in disguise, and were actuated more by the Jewish Law expressed in the Old Testament, than by the life of Jesus, who placed man above the Sabbath

and taught that the good is that which serves. ¶ And so Benedict Spinoza, the Rabbi, gentle, spiritual, kind, heir to the Jewish faith, learned in all the refinements of Jewish Law, knowing minutely the history of the race, knowing that for which the curses of Judaism were reserved, perceiving with unblinking eyes the absurdity and folly of all dogmatic belief, gradually withdrew from practicing and following "Law," preferring his own common sense. There were threats, then attempts to bribe, and again threats and finally excommunication and curses so terrible that if they were carried out, a man would walk the earth an exile—unknown by brothers and sisters, shunned by the mother that gave him birth, a moral leper to his father, despised, rejected, turned away, spit upon by every being of his kind.

And here is the document:

By the sentence of the angels, by the decree of the saints, we anathematize, cut off, curse, and execrate Baruch Spinoza, in the presence of these sacred books with the six hundred and thirteen precepts which are written therein, with the anathema wherewith Joshua anathematized Jericho; with the cursing wherewith Elisha cursed the children; and with all the cursings which are written in the Book of the Law; cursed be he by day, and cursed by night; cursed when he lieth down, and cursed when he riseth up; cursed when he goeth out, and cursed when he cometh in; the Lord pardon him never; the wrath and fury of the Lord burn upon this man, and bring upon him all the curses which are written in the Book of the Law. The Lord blot out

his name under heaven. The Lord set him apart for destruction from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of the firmament which are written in the Book of the Law. There shall no one speak to him, no man write to him, no man show him any kindness, no man stay under the same roof with him, no man come nigh him ✍ ✍

WHEN the Jewish congregation had placed its ban upon Spinoza, he dropped the Jewish name Baruch, for the Latin, Benedictus. In this action he tokened his frame of mind: he was going to persist in his study of the Latin language, and his new name stood for peace or blessing, just as the other had, being essentially the same as our word benediction. The man's purpose was firm. To perfect himself in Latin, he began a study of Descartes' "Meditations," and this led to proving the Cartesian philosophy by a geometrical formula. In his quiet home among the simple Mennonites, five miles from Amsterdam, there gradually grew up around him a body of students to whom he read his writings. The Cartesian philosophy swings around the proposition that only through universal doubt can we at last reach truth. Spinoza soon went beyond this and made his plea for faith in a universal Good.

Five years went by—years of work at his lenses, helping his friends in their farm work, and several hours daily devoted to study and writing. Spinoza's manu-

scripts were handed around by his pupils. He wrote for them, and in making truth plain to them he made it clear to himself. The Jews at Amsterdam kept track of his doings and made charges to the Protestant authorities to the effect that Spinoza was guilty of treason, and his presence a danger to the State. Spies were about, and their presence becoming known to the Mennonites, caused uneasiness. To relieve his friends of a possible unpleasant situation, the gentle philosopher packed up his scanty effects and moved away. He went to the village of Voorburg, two miles from The Hague. ¶ Here he lived for seven years, often for six months not going farther than three miles from home. He studied, worked and wrote, and his writings were sent out to his few friends who circulated them among friends of theirs, and in time the manuscripts came back soiled and dog-eared, proof that some one had read them. Persecution binds human hearts, and at this time there was a brotherhood of thinkers throughout the capitals and University towns of Europe. Spinoza's name became known gradually to these—they grew to look for his monthly contribution, and in many places when his manuscript arrived little bands of earnest students would meet, and the manuscript would be read and discussed. The interdict placed on free thought made it attractive. Spinoza became recognized by the esoteric few as one of the world's great thinkers, although the good people with whom he lived knew him only as a model lodger, who kept regular hours and

made little trouble. Occasionally visitors would come from a distance and remain for hours discussing such abstract themes as the freedom of the will or the nature of the over-soul. And these visitors caused the rustic neighbors to grow curious, and we find Spinoza moving into the city and renting a modest back room. By a curious chance, his landlady, fifty years before, had been a servant in the household of Grotius, and once had locked that great man in a trunk and escorted him, right side up, across the border into Switzerland to escape the heresy-hunters who were looking for human kindling. This kind landlady, now grown old, and living largely in the past, saw points of resemblance between her philosophic boarder and the great Grotius, and soon waxed boastful to the neighbors. Spinoza noticed that he was being pointed out on the streets. His record had followed him. The Jews hated him because he was a renegade; the Christians hated him because he was a Jew, and both Catholics and Protestants shunned him when they ought not, and greeted him with howls when they should have let him alone.

He again moved his lodging to the suburbs of the city, where he lived with the family of Van der Spijck, a worthy Dutch painter who smoked his pipe in calm indifference to the Higher Criticism. For their quiet and studious lodger Van der Spijck and his wife had a profound regard. They did not understand him, but they believed in him. Often he would go to church with them and coming home would discuss the sermon with

them at length. The Lutheran pastor who came to call on the family invited Spinoza to join his flock, and they calmly discussed the questions of baptism and regeneration by faith together; but genius only expresses itself to genius, and the pastor went away mystified. Van der Spijck did not produce great art, yet his pictures are now in demand because he was the kind and loyal friend of Spinoza, and his heart, not his art, fixes his place in history,

In his sketch, Zangwill has certain of his old friends, members of the Van den Ende family, hunt out the philosopher in his obscure lodgings and pay him a social visit. Then it was that he turned pale, and stammeringly tried to conceal his agitation at mention of the name of the only woman he had ever loved.

The image of that one fine flaming up of divine passion followed him to the day of his death. It was too sacred for him to discuss—he avoided women, kept out of society, and forever in his sad heart there burned a shrine to the ideal. And so he lived, separate and apart. A single little room sufficed—the work-bench where he made his lenses near the window, and near at hand the table covered with manuscript where he wrote. Renan says that when he died, aged forty-three, his passing was like a sigh, he had lived so quietly--so few knew him—there were no earthly ties to break.

The worthy Van der Spijcks, plain, honest people, had invited him to go to church with them. He smilingly excused himself—he had thoughts he must write out

ere they escaped. When the good man and his wife returned in an hour, their lodger was dead.

A tablet on the house marks the spot, and but a short distance away in the open square sits his form in deathless bronze, pensively writing out an idea which we can only guess—or is it a last love-letter to the woman to whom he gave his heart and who pushed from her the gift?

SPINOZA had courage, yet great gentleness of disposition. His habit of mind was conciliatory: if strong opinions were expressed in his presence concerning some person or thing, he usually found some good to say of the person or an excuse for the thing. He was one of the most unselfish men in history—money was nothing to him, save as it might minister to his very few immediate wants or the needs of others. ¶ He smilingly refused a pension offered him by a French courtier if he would but dedicate a book to the King; and a legacy left him by an admiring student, Simon de Vries, was declined for the reason that it was too much and he did not wish the care of it. Later, he compromised with the heirs by accepting an income of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a year. "How unreasonable," he exclaimed, "they want me to accept five hundred florins a year—I told them I would take three hundred, but I will not be burdened by a stiver more." If he was financially free from the necessity of

earning his living at his trade, he feared the quality of his thought might be diluted. "You cannot think intently and intensely all of the time. Those who try it never are able to dive deep nor soar high. * * * Good digestion demands a certain amount of coarse food—refined and condensed aliment alone kills. Man should work and busy himself with the commonplace, rest himself for his flight, and when the moment of transfiguration comes, make the best of it."

All he asked was to be given the privilege to work and to think. As for expressing his thoughts, he made no public addresses and during his life only one of his books was printed. This was the "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus," which mentioned "Hamburg" on the title page, but with the author's name wisely omitted. Trite enough now are the propositions laid down—that God is everywhere and that man is brother to the tree, the rock, the flower. Emerson states the case in his "Over-Soul" & "Spiritual Laws" in the true, calm Spinozistic style—as if the gentle Jew had come back to earth and dictated his thought, refined, polished and smooth as one of his own little lenses, to the man of Concord. Benedictus Concordia, blessing and peace be with thee!

¶ But the lynx-eyed censors soon discovered this single, solitary book of Spinoza's, and although they failed to locate the author, Spinoza had the satisfaction of seeing the work placed on the Index and a general interdict issued against it by Christendom and Judea as well. It was really of some importance. It was so

thoroughly in demand that it still circulated with false title pages. In the Lenox Library, New York, is a copy of the first edition, finely bound, and lettered thus: "A Treatise on the Sailing of Ships against the Wind," which shows the straits booksellers were put to in evading the censors, and also reveals a touch of wit that doubtless was appreciated by the Elect.

His modesty, patience, kindness and freedom from all petty whim and prejudice set Spinoza apart as a marked man. Withal he was eminently religious, and the reference to him by Novalis as "the God-intoxicated man" seems especially applicable to one who saw God in everything.

Renan said at the dedication of The Hague monument to Spinoza, "Since the days of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius we have not seen a life so profoundly filled with the sentiment of the divine."

When walking along the streets of The Hague and coarse voices called after him in guttural, "Kill the renegade!" he said calmly, "We must remember that these men are expressing the essence of their being, just as I express the essence of mine."

SPINOZA taught that the love of God is the supreme good; that virtue is its own reward, and folly its own punishment; and that every one ought to love his neighbor and obey the civil powers. ¶ He made no enemies except by his opinions. He was

infinitely patient, sweet in temper—had respect for all religions, and never offended by parading his heresies in the faces of others.

Nothing but the kicks of scorn and the contumely that came to Spinoza could possibly have freed him to the extent he was free from Judaistic bonds.

He had disciples who called him "Master," and who taught him nothing but patience in answering their difficulties.

One is amazed at the hunger of the mind at the time of Spinoza. Men seemed to think, and dare to grasp for "New Thought" to a marvelous extent.

Spinoza says that "evil" and "good" have no objective reality, but are merely relative to our feelings, and that "evil" in particular is nothing positive, but a privation only, or non-existence.

Spinoza says that love consecrates every indifferent particular connected with the object of affection. Good is that which we certainly know to be useful to us. Evil is that which we certainly know stands in the way of our command of good.

Good is that which helps. Bad is that which hinders our self-maintenance and active powers.

A passage from Spinoza which well reveals his habit of thought and which placed the censors on his track runs as follows:

The ultimate design of the State is not to dominate men, to restrain them by fear, to make them subject to the will of others, but, on the contrary, to permit every

one, as far as possible, to live in security. That is to say, to preserve intact the natural right which is his, to live without being harmed himself or doing harm to others. No, I say, the design of the State is not to transform men into animals or automata from reasonable beings; its design is to arrange matters that citizens may develop their minds and bodies in security, and to make free use of their reason. The true design of the State, then, is liberty. Whoever would respect the rights of the sovereign ought never to act in opposition to his decrees; but each has a right to think as he pleases and to say what he thinks, provided that he limits himself to speaking and to teaching in the name of pure reason, and that he does not attempt, in his private capacity, to introduce innovations into the State. For example, a citizen demonstrates that a certain law is repugnant to sound reason, and believing this, he thinks it ought to be abrogated. If he submits his opinion to the judgment of the sovereign, to which alone it belongs to establish and to abolish laws, and if, in the meantime, he does nothing contrary to law, he certainly deserves well of the State as being a good citizen.

Let us admit that it is possible to stifle liberty of men and to impose on them a yoke, to the point that they dare not even murmur, however feebly, without the consent of the sovereign, never, it is certain, can any one hinder them from thinking according to their own free will. What follows hence? It is that men will think one way and speak another; that, consequently, good faith, so essential a virtue to a State, becomes corrupted; that adulation, so detestable, and perfidy, shall be held in honor, bringing in their train a decadence of all good and sound habitudes. What can be more fatal to a State than to exile, as malcontents, honest citizens, simply because they do not hold the opinion

of the multitude, and because they are ignorant of the art of dissembling! What can be more fatal to a State than to treat as enemies and to put to death men who have committed no other crime than that of thinking independently! Behold, then, the scaffold, the dread of the bad man, which now becomes the glorious theatre where tolerance and virtue blaze forth in all their splendor, and covers publicly with opprobium the sovereign majesty! Assuredly, there is but one thing which that spectacle can teach us, and that is to imitate these noble martyrs, or, if we fear death, to become the abject flatterers of the powerful. Nothing hence can be so perilous as to relegate and submit to divine right things which are purely speculative, and to impose laws upon opinions which are, or at least ought to be, subject to discussion among men. If the right of the State were limited to repressing acts, and speech were allowed impunity, controversies would not turn so often into seditions.

HERE ENDETH THE LITTLE JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF SPINOZA, AS WRITTEN BY ELBERT HUBBARD. THE BORDERS AND INITIALS BEING DESIGNED BY ROYCROFT ARTISTS, PORTRAIT BY OTTO J. SCHNEIDER AND THE WHOLE DONE INTO A PRINTED BOOK BY THE ROYCROFTERS AT THEIR SHOP IN EAST AURORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK, MAY OF THE YEAR MCMIV

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